

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2010

John Olver, Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, HUD and Related Agencies
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Tom Latham, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, HUD and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Latham,

As members of House Livable Communities Task Force, we appreciate your leadership on the issue of livable communities. Your interest in and support for transportation choices, equitable and affordable housing, and strong neighborhoods has bolstered the efforts of the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to make the Federal government a better partner to urban and rural communities nation-wide. As you draft the FY 2011 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we encourage you to continue this leadership by providing strong funding to the livable communities programs within HUD and DOT.

The administration's FY 2011 budget included hundreds of millions of dollars in new funding for livable communities activities at HUD and DOT pursuant to their participation in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities with the Environmental Protection Agency. These programs will provide funding for the agencies to assist communities with regional planning to integrate housing, transportation and environmental protection to encourage more sustainable development patterns and more cost-effective investments that benefit the environment and the economy. Funding will also help communities implement these plans by building transit-oriented developments, expanding affordable location-efficient housing, developing alternative and inter-modal transportation networks, and creating safe, walkable neighborhoods. In addition, they will provide support for each agency to better integrate and coordinate programs. We strongly support this new funding, and urge the Committee to consider supporting these programs in the FY 2011 THUD Appropriations Bill.

Specifically, we support:

- \$150 million for HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative to enable HUD to continue supporting, according to the Budget, "comprehensive regional and community planning efforts that integrate transportation and housing investments that result in more regional and local sustainable development patterns, reduce greenhouse gases, and increase more transit accessible housing choices for residents."
- \$150 million for HUD's Catalytic Investment Fund, which will provide large-scale grants for economic investments in communities targeted for job creation in the neighborhoods

hardest hit by the economic crisis. This funding will support reclaiming vacant property and transit-oriented development.

- \$250 million for HUD's Choice Neighborhoods, which will support public/private partnerships to transform public housing into revitalized, transit-rich, mixed-use neighborhoods.
- \$20 million for the Department of Transportation's Office of Livable Communities. The creation of this office will help the Secretary coordinate livability and sustainability work throughout the Department and coordinate with similar programs at HUD and EPA.
- \$200 million for the Federal Highway Administration to help states and local governments integrate transportation, land use and natural resource conservation planning processes. This will help communities prepare for a performance-based, livability focused transportation program. Additional funding for the Department of Transportation to help state and local governments invest in transportation infrastructure that reduces greenhouse gases, improves mobility and access to economic opportunity, and increases housing choices.

The administration's budget includes a number of new programs, such as a Livable Communities Account within the Federal Transit Administration and the National Infrastructure Innovation and Financing Fund, which will promote livable communities and merit further consideration. While we understand that the programs in the administration's FY 2011 Budget do not necessarily correspond to those in the Surface Transportation Authorization Act proposed by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, we strongly support the motives behind the funding in the Budget and urge funding for these types of activities. We look forward to working with both the Appropriations Committee and authorizing committees to further develop these concepts.

With this funding, HUD and DOT will be able to help make communities more economically competitive, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. Recent studies have shown that communities that provide safe, reliable transportation choices and location efficient housing have helped reduce the impact of high gas prices on their constituents and have experienced fewer mortgage foreclosures than areas without these attributes¹. A survey done by the National Association of Realtors in 2007 suggests that 90% of Americans wish their cities were more walkable. This translates to more valuable homes: on average, homes with better access to safe walking and biking routes are worth an additional \$4,000 to \$34,000. In addition, it is clear that communities with more compact development that include low-carbon transportation choices such as walking, biking, and mass transit emit less pollution and have smaller carbon footprints.² Finally, the way communities are designed can have a significant impact on physical and mental

¹ "Reducing Foreclosures and Environmental Impacts through Location Efficient Neighborhood Design," NRDC, 2010


² Analysis for the Transportation Sector Greenhouse Gas and Oil Reduction Scenarios," EPA, 2010; "Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change," Urban Land Institute, 2008

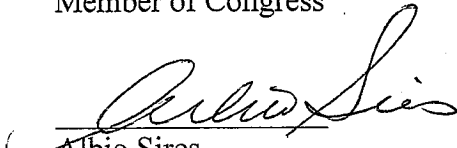
THUD Livability Request
March 18, 2010

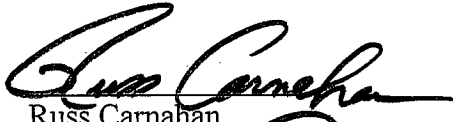
health. A healthy community includes not only clean air and water, but opportunities for safe physical activities and access to healthy food options within walking distance. Investments in livable communities will increase the number of people who engage in walking and biking as their primary mode of transportation.

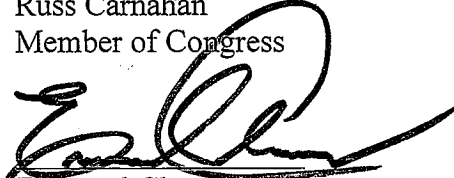
We hope you will strongly consider this request. Members of the Livable Communities Task Force stand ready to work with you to provide the support for investments that make our communities more livable.

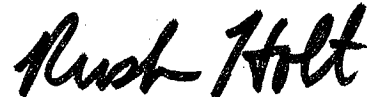
Sincerely,


Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress

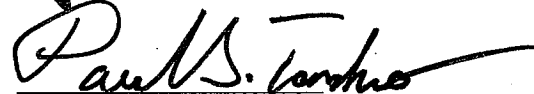

Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

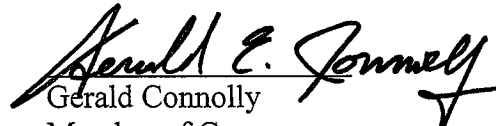

Rush Holt
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

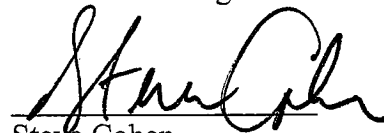

Debbie Halvorson
Member of Congress

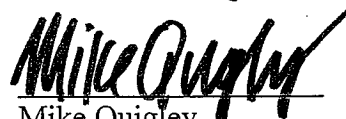

James P. Moran
Member of Congress

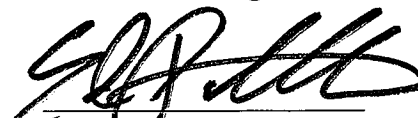

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress


Gerald Connolly
Member of Congress

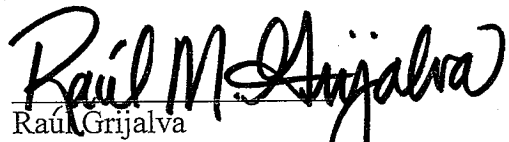

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

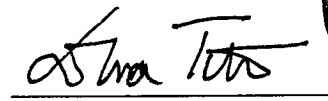

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

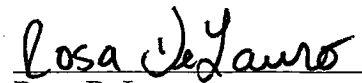

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

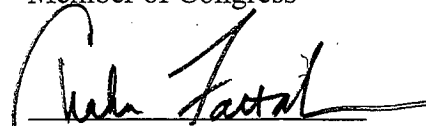

Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress

THUD Livability Request
March 18, 2010


Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress


Dina Titus
Member of Congress


Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress


Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress